

**From:** Sarah Berg <[sarahberg8@gmail.com](mailto:sarahberg8@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 27, 2023 2:17 PM  
**To:** Lou Leone <[Leone@cityofharvard.org](mailto:Leone@cityofharvard.org)>  
**Subject:** Backyard Chickens

For your information and to pass on to Planning and Zoning Commission

Dear Mayor, Alderpersons, and Planning & Zoning members,

I write regarding requests to permit the pasturing of chickens and other farm animals within the City limits. I have several questions about the impact of such residential zoning changes.

1. Why are we even discussing this now? The City is well aware of many addresses where chickens are being raised in backyards, but nothing has been done to date. Many of them are now raising ducks and roosters. Soon we'll have mini pig, sheep, and goat farms dotting our residential neighborhoods. An ordinance authorizing and legitimizing these practices Citywide seems a horrible idea. Remember allowing new zoning use for everyone would make it difficult if not impossible to take this right away from those even in violation and would instead create a never ending chase for compliance for many individuals.
2. If the City permits my upwind neighbor to now use his property to raise chickens, what impact does this have on my use and enjoyment of my property? I now have to smell farmyard animals and their waste, hear their constant clucking, and enjoy the new wildlife that will be moving in to eat them and their eggs? In response to the price you're asking us to pay, what is the benefit to my neighbor? How much are they saving on the price of eggs for their family of four to justify perhaps forcing some of your citizens to have to deal with some potentially significant public health and safety concerns as well as possible animal abuse or health or safety situations?
3. Does this negative impact on my property constitute a government taking entitling me and others similarly situated to compensation for the loss in value to our property. Remember: When I bought my property, my neighboring property wasn't a chicken farm, but now you're changing the permitted use to permit agricultural use in a residential zoning district. The City could risk being declared a direct or proximate cause of claimed harm to a particular property. Win or lose in such legal battles, the City (taxpayers) could still be faced with significant legal costs.
4. Isn't this really best handled by an amendment to the zoning code that would only permit this as a conditional use? This would allow the applications to be heard on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration what is planned, the position of neighboring property owners, lot sizes, and the like. As proposed, we could have our hospital, senior housing, and other properties collared by mini chicken farms. If the urban chicken farmers wish to go forward with their plans safely and with respect to their neighbors as they say, then they shouldn't hesitate to agree to regular inspections to insure compliance with health, safety, noise, and odor controls but in place on a case by case basis.
5. While I and many others fundamentally disagree with allowing any chickens under any circumstance on residential properties please take into consideration our request for a more equitable inclusive regulation as a solution in this matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Berg